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The Black Cat

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The Statement of Jared Johnson.
$350 Prize Story.
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The Horn of Marcus Brunder.
Howard Reynolds.

On the Trail of the Dolan Outfit.
G. B. Dunham.

She Said, "Come."
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Old Double-talk's Compassion.
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The Black Cat

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The Statement of Jared Johnson.*

BY GERALDINE BONNER.

AM going to write my side of the famous "Johnson Case."

It's a pretty hard thing to go over in cold blood, but I want the public to hear my version of the story. They know the case against me has been dismissed and they've read in the papers what I said, but it's been so mixed up and so misrepresented that I've decided to make my own statement — to write down as simply and as honestly as I can just how it was I came to be suspected.

My name is Jared Johnson and until I was arrested on the 23d of last December, I was the janitor of the Fremont Building, and had been so for two years past.

The Fremont, as people know now, since the trial made it famous, is an old building off Washington Square. It was one of those houses that still exist in that quarter of the city, which used to be the homes of the gentry and gradually got down in the world

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till they were first sliced off into flats, and then split up into offices.

The Fremont had been a fine, well built house in the beginning, and even when I came into it was in good repair. But it was old-fashioned, without elevators or electric lights, and the offices rented for low prices.

The top story had been used as a photograph gallery, and had long glass skylights in the ceiling. But that was before my time. Ever since I'd been janitor it had been leased by a society of ladies for a studio. One batch painted there all the morning and another all the afternoon. They had models who used to pose for them and who were forever clattering up and down stairs — mostly Italians and generally a pretty tough-looking lot.

This room was a good deal of a charge on me, for I had to keep it heated up to a tremendous temperature, because the models stood up to be painted in their skins as God made them. And, if they were dagoes, I couldn't let them take their deaths. One end of the room, under the corner skylight, was curtained off for them to use as a dressing room.

Below this were four floors of offices and lodgings, and in the basement I and my wife, Rosy, had our rooms. I have to be particular about describing all this, because I want those who read my statement to have everything clear in their minds.

Just about the middle of December there was a great frost, the worst cold snap I remember, and I came to New York from Ohio when I was twelve. On the morning of December 17th Rosy told me that the thermometer outside Miss Maitland, the typewriter's, window, had dropped to 3 above zero. It was mortal cold. I was kept busy building fires and seeing that the steam heat was on full pressure.

I was proud of the old Fremont for not a pipe in her burst or froze. And next door in the Octagon Building, a brand new skyscraper, twelve stories, and with all the modern improvements, the pipes on our side burst and froze so that the ice was clogged down the sides of them in a huge mass with icicles as long as your arm.

I noticed this on the morning of December 17th when I was rubbing off the skylights in the studio. I was standing on a

step-ladder when I looked up at the wall of the Octagon rising like a cliff, and just on the angle, a little above our roof, were the pipes with the ice wrapped round them like a winding sheet. I couldn't help laughing for they'd blown so about the Octagon and her "modern improvements."

Two days later the black frost broke and there was the biggest thaw that ever was seen. It got soft and warm like Spring, the streets began to swim with water, and all day long the boys were coming down from the offices complaining of the steam heat. I was on the rush all day, for to add to everything else it was Saturday, and Rosy and I have most of the building to ourselves that day and we do the cleaning.

But we didn't do as much as usual that Saturday, for, as I had to tell on the trial, and so must repeat it now, Rosy and I had fallen out. We'd been bickering for quite a while past and Saturday it seemed as if we couldn't meet on the stairs or hand each other a broom or a pail without snapping and nagging. I'm not blaming her, for I was as ugly as she, only my temper is not of that kind. It's the still, sulky sort, and it rises slowly but takes a long time to cool.

The trouble between us was this — Heaven forgive me for raking it all up after Rosy proved herself to be the truest wife a man ever had, but it's part of my statement, and has to go in — Rosy was jealous. She'd always been inclined that way, and when we were first married and everything she did seemed just about right, I tried never to bother or annoy her.

But after five years of marriage I wasn't quite so considerate, and though I swear before Heaven I never did aught that any man mightn't do without shame or blame, I wasn't so mindful of what Rosy liked or disliked. I know now that, without meaning it, I must have provoked her often. I suspect I did it to tease her a little, and I suspect I did it to prove to her that I was my own master and wasn't going to have any woman dictating to me.

It was one of the models up in the ladies' studio that Rosy was jealous about. Most of them being dagoes, as black as mulattoes, and only speaking their own talk, I had no words with them. But there was one of them, Alice Merrion, that was of Irish parentage but American born, and with her I struck up an ac-

quaintance, and we used to stop and pass the time of day when we met on the stairs or in the hall.

Rosy took a dislike to Alice Merrion right from the start. She said she couldn't bear her because she was a model. Nothing that you could say would make Rosy believe that a girl could be honest and earn her living that way.

As for Alice Merrion's looks — she couldn't understand why any one wanted to paint her picture. To tell the truth, I often thought this too, for Alice wasn't what I'd call a pretty girl. She had freckles, yellowish-green eyes and a big bush of red hair that stood out like flames round her head.

I liked the girl and I was sorry for her. She was one of the best I ever knew, honest as a die and straight as a string for all her being a model. She supported her mother, and if ever I was sure of anything in my life, I was sure of Alice Merrion's character. But I wasn't any more taken with her than a married man might be honestly taken with any decent girl.

On Saturday afternoon, the ladies going home early, I made it my business to clean up the studio and lock it till Monday morning. On Saturday, December 19th, the ladies left even earlier than usual, the day settling down dark and threatening rain, and about four I went up with my broom and pail.

I was mightily surprised when I opened the door to see Alice sitting huddled up, cowering over the stove. She was right under the middle skylight and the gray, wintery light fell in on her red hair that was loosely knotted up and looked like a fiery crown. From under her skirt her bare feet were thrust out on the stove ledge, and she had a shawl folded round her shoulders, with her bare arms, white as marble, coming out.

"Why, Alice," said I, "what's up? It's past four and here you are, not even dressed yet."

She looked up at me and I saw that her cheeks were pale and her eyes looked dull and heavy.

"I feel sick," she said, drawing her hand over her forehead, and pushing back her hair. "I've got something sure. A little while ago I was as hot as this stove, and now I'm freezing."

She crouched over it spreading out her hands. I touched one of them; it was like ice. As I stood looking at her I heard the

first drops of rain — big, heavy, slow drops — fall on the skylight.

"You've caught a bad cold," I said to her. "You want something to warm you up. Don't you think a cup of tea would do you good?"

Her face brightened directly.

"Oh, Mr. Johnson," she said, "do you think you could get me one? I didn't have a bite of lunch to-day. I felt so bad. And then I stood here for two hours and that's hard work, even when you're well. I think if I could get something hot I'd feel better."

She looked up at me with her big, yellowish eyes shining through the gray light, and if ever I was sorry for a woman it was for her. I wished that Rosy wasn't so down on her and I'd have taken her to our rooms and given her a good meal.

"Rest here easy," I said to her, "and I'll get you a bite that will brace you up. I won't be long," and I went out and down the stairs feeling angrier than ever with Rosy for her senseless prejudice.

I hoped and prayed that there might be no one in the kitchen and things went my way for once. Rosy was not there. So I made a little brew of tea, cut some bread and butter, put it on a tray and set off up the stairs.

And it was here that my luck deserted me. For, on the second landing, I met Miss Maitland going out.

"What's the matter?" says she, looking at the tray. "Any one sick?"

It didn't cross my mind not to tell the truth and I answered:

"The model, ma'am, on the top floor, has caught a chill and feels bad."

Miss Maitland laughed and went down the stairs and her testimony in court, if you remember, was pretty damaging for me.

On the fourth floor I ran into Mr. Raymond on the landing. Mr. Raymond is my favorite in the whole Fremont. He is a stenographer and rents all the back rooms on that floor, some of them for offices and the rest for his own lodgings.

"Hullo, Johnson," he says to me in his jolly way, "taking that up to me? Made a mistake this time. That's not my particular tipple."

I laughed, for we all knew that Mr. Raymond's tipple was a pretty strong one.

"No, sir," I said. "It's for Alice Merrion in the studio. She's taken with a chill. She's had nothing to eat since morning and I thought this would warm her up a little."

"Ah, poor girl!" he says, going on down the passage to his own rooms. Then over his shoulder he called: "If you want anything stronger — if she feels faint, or anything—just drop in on me and I'll give it to you."

And he went down the passage. Those two meetings were about as bad for me as they could be, as it turned out afterward.

I went into the studio and found Alice just as I had left her. She drank the tea and ate the bread with a relish and I began to get things ready for my cleaning. Now and then we spoke to each other, and betweenwhiles we could hear the rain drumming on the skylight. It grew dark and leaden, and, as I moved, I could see through the skylights the big wall of the Octagon, with the windows springing out in yellow squares as the gases were lit.

When Alice had finished, I knew she'd want to dress and go home, so I made an excuse to go. She watched me as I set the tea things back on the tray and then said suddenly:

"You're very good to me; let's shake hands."

I was surprised, but took her hand and shook it.

"You're a good girl," I said to her, "mind you remember that I'm always your friend."

"Thanks, Jared Johnson," said she quite solemnly, "I know that. Good-by."

I turned round and went, some way or other feeling sort of strange and awed. I shut the door behind me and as I was on the stairs I heard her lock it.

In the kitchen I found Rosy. The moment she saw the tray her face darkened, and she pulled up short in her work and eyed me with a sharp look. I was irritable myself, angry with her for her treatment of Alice Merrion, and when she looked at me that way, it made me blaze up. Without waiting for her to ask me, I told her who the tray was for and where I had been.

I don't think it's necessary for me to tell just what we said to each other, but we had a quarrel — a bitter one. Now that both

of us have felt what real misery is, we realize with shame what a pair of crazy fools we were.

But we thought of nothing then but our own anger. I don't remember all I said. I felt that black rage a man sometimes feels when a woman he loves and honors flings in his teeth low meannesses he never thought of doing. In the middle of it I got up and ran out of the room, banging the door. I went down to the cellar, and stayed there all night sleeping on a pile of gunny sacks in front of the furnace.

The next day Rosy and I were about as stiff to each other as we could be. We hardly spoke at all and ate our meals in a heavy silence. Monday morning broke with a blue sky and sunlight outside, but between us there was still cloudy weather.

I got up early, for I had to build fires in some of the offices, especially in the studio, which, by eight o'clock, was supposed to be warmed and ready for the first class. As I went up the third flight of stairs, Mr. Raymond came out on the landing.

"Hullo! Johnson," says he, "what the devil's the matter with this building? Is she settling?"

"The Fremont's as good as she ever was, sir," I answered. "What's the matter?"

"The ceiling's come down in my bathroom," says he. "Early this morning — whang! bang! — down she came. Come and see the scene of carnage."

I followed him into the bathroom, which opened off the end of the passage, and there, sure enough, the ceiling was down. I picked up a piece of the plaster and felt that it was wet.

"A leak," I said, "the rain's come in above."

"Oh, then," he says, suddenly, "that explains the crash of glass I heard Saturday evening. There was a tremendous smashing of glass from somewhere up there."

This startled me. I suppose I looked sort of alarmed, for Mr. Raymond said,

"I'll go up with you. Probably the skylight's broken."

We ran up the last flight and tried the studio door. It was locked, and when I tried my key I found that there was one already in the keyhole.

I don't know then just what I thought, but I know a deadly

feeling of fear took hold of my heart. Mr. Raymond must have seen it in my face.

"Break in the door," says he in a low voice, and, as he spoke, he put his shoulder to the panel and pressed. In a moment we had ripped off the old socket that held the lock and the door burst in.

There was a sudden sharp current of air, cold and wet, and the brown curtain over the models' dressing corner swelled out on the draught. A window was open somewhere and part of the floor was dark with rain stains.

We shut the door with the key still in the lock and ran to where the curtain fell back into its straight folds. Behind it we saw a sight that neither of us will ever forget.

Alice Merrion lay on her face on the floor, the skylight above her broken, and the fragments of glass scattered in every direction.

She was fully dressed, except for her shoes, one of which she held in her hand. Through the broken skylight the rain had beaten upon her till her clothes, the floor, her hair, were oozing moisture. The latter was wet with something else which dyed it a deeper red. The back of her skull was fractured and partly driven in. She was rigid in death, her eyes open, and an expression of strange, terrified surprise stamped upon her features.

That first glimpse impressed every detail of the room upon my mind. Her hat and jacket were hanging from a peg in the wall. On the shelf under the square of looking-glass lay some hair-pins and her purse. All about — on her dress, in her hair, on the floor — shone bits of the shivered skylight. The panes of glass were of a good size and were fitted into light, thin supports of iron. Just in the middle two of these were bowed downward.

We bent over her to see if there were any signs of life, but she was cold and stiff as a marble statue. The physicians afterward said that when we found her she had been dead about thirty-six hours. She had evidently been putting on her shoes when struck down by the terrific blow that killed her.

That is as truthful a description as I can write of the finding of Alice Merrion's body. I ought to know how to do it by this time. I've not only told it so often, but I've dreamed it night

after night till I wonder if I'm going to go on dreaming it forever.

The next day I was arrested on suspicion as the murderer and a week later was indicted by the Grand Jury. My trial followed in two months.

I never knew until I was in danger of losing my life on circumstantial evidence how important the most insignificant things can become when people are looking for incriminating actions and words. Foolish things I had said came up against me as black as night. The cup of tea I took the girl was as bad for me as if it had been a cup of poison. But worst of all was the quarrel I had with Rosy. It all had to come out, and the newspapers that were not on my side said it was as bad for me as if I'd been caught red-handed.

I could see as plain as anybody that the case against me was a strong one. It started on the theory that I was in love with Alice Merrion. Both Rosy and I acknowledged that we'd more than once quarrelled about her. On the afternoon of December 19th I had had a final interview with her. There were different opinions as to what this had been about. Some had it that she'd threatened to expose me to my wife, who was jealous already; others that she'd given me to understand she wouldn't have anything to do with me. Whatever she'd said, she'd scared or angered me till I'd crept up on her from the back and struck her dead with one — or some thought two — savage blows.

To turn aside suspicion I had then locked the door and left the key in it, had broken the skylight — the noise of which Mr. Raymond had heard at a few minutes after five — and, under cover of the dark, had dropped from the roof to the fire-escapes. When I got to the kitchen my nerves were naturally unstrung and I had quarrelled with my wife, left the room, and had not been seen again until the morning.

The one link in the chain which did not fit was how I had brought the tea tray down with me. The only way I could have done this was to have put it outside the door, and then, after escaping by the fire-ladders, crept back for it and come down again. This, people said, was a proof of my fiendish coolness and cunning.

The fact that the evidence pointed to no one else made it all the worse for me. There did not seem to be a human creature but myself who could be suspected. The girl had no enemies and no followers that anybody knew of. She had led a quiet and perfectly respectable life. That the object was not theft was proved by the fact that her purse, containing twenty dollars, was untouched. There was no doubt that somebody had murdered her, and the murder could be fastened on no one but me.

One of the questions over which there was great argument was what instrument or weapon had been used to deliver the blow. On the upper part of the occiput, just below the crown, the skin and flesh had been cleanly cut as though struck with something sharp-edged or pointed.

There were expert surgeons called up to examine the wounds and they each had their own ideas as to what the murderer had used. One thought a bayonet, or something shaped like a bayonet, such as a pickaxe or an ice-pick. Another said a hatchet or axe. And one — he was the most celebrated of the lot — said he thought that not one but two implements had been employed, a sharp one which cut the scalp, and a heavy one which fractured the skull.

It was this man who said that the murderer had evidently been in a state of frenzy, as the blow or blows must have been of terrific force to so crush the skull. His evidence started the theory that the girl had been killed by a maniac who had entered and come out by the skylight.

The first days of the trial were so terrible I hate to think of them. The whole world seemed against me. The reporters used to come and talk with me and then write me up as "a man with the face of an assassin" or describe me as "the human bloodhound."

Some of them were friendly fellows too—used to clap me on the back and say, "Brace up, old boy, they've not got enough evidence to convict you"; but when it came to believing in me, that was quite another story. I was Jared Johnson The Suspect, as they called me, a good case to make copy out of, and that was all.

There was one of them that I didn't take much notice of or stock in at first. He was the youngest looking chap for his age I ever saw. When I first saw him I thought he was about eigh-

teen. He was a little, thin, smooth-faced, light-haired boy, and new to the business, as you could see by the quiet bashful sort of way he hung round when the others were there.

One day he got at me alone and began to talk to me, easy and natural, as man to man. He told me he was from Ohio, as I was, and that broke the ice right off. Then he said his name was John Paul Hayne, and he was twenty-six years old. He sat quite a while talking of places in the old state we both knew, and I got to feel as if I was a civilized Christian once more, not an Apache Indian that all the world was chasing. When he got up to go, he stood round for a minute in an uneasy sort of way, and then he suddenly says to me, looking me straight in the eye:

"Jared Johnson, you're not guilty of that murder."

He didn't say it as if he was asking a question, or as if he was trying to persuade himself — he just stated a fact. I looked back at him and I said as quietly as he:

"You're right. But what makes you think so?"

"Oh," says he, speaking in a queer sort of way he had with him, "I can see a church by daylight. I've seen a lot while I've been loafing round here."

The next time he came we had a long talk. He told me he'd viewed the premises and the body the morning the murder was discovered. He was sent by his paper, The Scoop. And since then he'd been there several times on his own account.

"And you know," says he, "I've come to a conclusion. The thing that killed Alice Merrion didn't *go* through the skylight, it *came* through it."

"What makes you think that?" I asked.

"The way the iron stanchions were bent. They say the weight of the man hanging to them and pulling himself up bowed them down. Now, I say that's a mistake. To bend those rods that way a man would have to be a giant — a second Sandow. It was the weight of something that struck them from above — a tremendous weight — that bent and almost broke them."

"What could strike down from there?" I asked. "There's nothing between the roof of the Fremont and Heaven."

"That's the trick," said he. "You tell me what could, and I'll tell you what killed Alice Merrion."

It seemed to me all idle talk, but I couldn't help saying:

"I don't see how you make that out. Alice was struck on the back of the head. If a thing fell on her it would have caught her on the top of her head. She must have been standing right under the skylight."

He leaned forward and put his fingers on my arm, his eyes shining like jewels.

"Johnson," says he, "you're an honest man, I've no doubt, but you've not got much sense. Don't you remember that she was putting on her shoes? Did you ever see a woman put on her shoes? She leans over so that her head's bent forward this way—" and he bent his head far down till the back of his neck was stretched out beyond his collar.

"I guess you and the doctor have got the same idea," said I. "There is nothing that could come down on her from above and strike her dead with one blow but a madman who had been creeping about on the roofs."

"I worked over that theory for some time," says he, "but I've come to the conclusion that there's nothing in it. Between the breaking of the glass and the falling of the blow she could have got to the door. No—she was surprised as she was putting on her shoes—surprised and killed in the same instant."

I thought of the expression of her face that morning when we found her dead and stiff, and I looked at John Paul Hayne and nodded without speaking.

After this I saw him every few days. He asked me lots of questions and I got to answering him pretty freely, for I saw that he didn't publish what I said, and I got a great liking for him. He was forever starting theories, but I didn't see that they came to anything.

It was just about this time that the second cold snap struck the city. It was precious cold in my cell and I thought of the old Fremont and Rosy's sitting room with a fire shining through the bars of the grate. Lord! but those times seemed a long way off!

Rosy came to see me with her ears tied up in a worsted scarf. She said it was not as cold as the first snap, but, none the less, the Octagon pipes had frozen and burst again. Some of the Octagon people had come over to the Fremont to ask for rooms.

They said the Octagon was a sham, run up by contract and badly built from the curbstone to the chimneys.

Because of these applications the owners of the Fremont were thinking of tearing out the inside of the studio and fitting it up for offices. But, so far, it stood just as it did the morning Alice Merrion's body was found there. The detectives working on the case wouldn't have it touched.

The cold spell was a short one. The back of the winter was broken and it gave way in three days with a big thaw. The sun beat down like Spring and everything ran water.

My trial was going on daily. The evidence for the defence was nearly all in. I was in a strange state of mind — sometimes I felt wild as if I was being smothered; then again I'd be dull and dead-like, not caring what happened.

People kept on saying "They can't convict you on the evidence they've got." But I didn't care much for that. Even if the jury disagreed I was ruined. I'd have to go back to the world and for the rest of my life be pointed out as the man who had brutally murdered a poor, sick, defenceless girl. I'd rather have died, only for Rosy.

It was the afternoon of the third warm day. I'll never forget that day if I live to be two hundred. The window of the cell was open and every now and then a little breath of soft air came in — air full of Spring.

I was alone, sick at heart and dead beat. I'd been in the court room since morning. They'd had Rosy on the stand, and the poor girl had got mixed up and made things between us look as bad as could be. Then, seeing what she had done, and being weak and frightened, she'd gone off into hysterics, and they could not get her into any sort of condition to go on. So the case had been called off until Monday and I'd seen Rosy taken out sobbing and half dead, and been brought back to my cell.

I was sitting on the edge of the bed when I heard the rattling of bolts and voices at the door, and in came Hayne. The light from the window fell full on his face and it shone as if there was a lamp lit inside it. The look of him brought me on to my feet as if I'd been yanked up by a derrick. I said something, I don't know what. Maybe I didn't speak at all, but I know I tried to.

Without saying a word he took off his hat and held it out to me. I looked at it stupidly. It was a brown derby, the top broken and split.

"Look at that, Johnson," he said, shaking it under my eyes — "look at it well. It's saved you. Do you understand me? It's saved your life."

I stared at him and tried to say something but my tongue wouldn't work.

He pushed me back on the bed and, holding the hat in front of me, began to talk quick with his breath catching in between like a man who's been running.

"My hat's been ruined in that studio of yours — the studio of the Fremont. Fortunately, Raymond and his assistant stenographer were there and saw the catastrophe. See," he said, thrusting his hand through the hole in the crown. "What a blow!"

"A blow!" I said. "Who struck it?"

"The same person who struck Alice Merrion."

We were silent for a second, staring at each other. I could hear my heart beating like a hammer. Then he began:

"I've been in the studio a good deal lately, studying the place. To-day I stopped there at about mid-day, to have another look at those bent rods we've so often spoken of. On the landing I met Raymond and his assistant, and they went in with me, as I wanted to explain to them my idea about the rods. I got on a chair under the broken skylight and they stood below, listening to my explanation. As I stood that way the sun beat down on my head almost as hot as summer and I could hear the dripping of the water from the icicles on the Octagon pipes.

"All of a sudden, without warning, I heard a sharp, snapping sound, there was a crashing noise, and something struck me on the head a stultifying blow. I shouted and struck up, and Raymond and the stenographer caught me as I fell, for I was stunned for a moment. When I pulled myself together I saw that the floor was covered with icicles and chunks of solid ice. Looking up we could see that the great bunch which had been hanging to the pipes had broken off, snapped by its own weight in the thaw."

I fell back on the bed, holding his hand, and stammering something — Heaven knows what.

"Brace up, old man," says he. "You can see daylight now all right. Raymond says that the icicles on the pipes in the last frost were triple that size and weight. *They* bent the iron rods and tore the skylight out. *They* murdered Alice Merrion. All you can say is that they killed her quickly. They must have fallen in two detachments, the vibration of the first break dislodging the second mass, which came almost in the same instant. The glass was broken and the huge, jagged iceberg with its pointed daggers, must have plunged through the opening and in one breath struck the girl senseless and lifeless. Why, pull yourself together old man — you're as white as chalk."

Well, that's all.

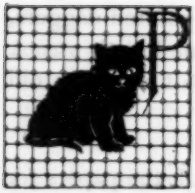
The rest of the story is too well known through the papers for me to tell it. The case of the State against Jared Johnson was dismissed. There was a great day when I said good-by to them all and came out into the daylight again — an innocent man.

But I'm not going to stay here. No. Too many people know me by sight and stare at me, and I can't bear to pass the old Fremont Rosy and I are going back to Ohio; my brother has a farm there and I'm to help work it with him.

As for John Paul Hayne, I'm glad to say they've raised his salary on The Scoop. One of those sensational papers offered him a hundred dollars a week, but he wouldn't take it. He's a fine boy. He's promised to write to me every two weeks.

The Horn of Marcus Brunder.*

BY HOWARD REYNOLDS.



ICKING his way carefully through the crowded down-town streets I had often noticed a strange, bent figure — a man of remarkably shrewd and intelligent face — but having the appearance of premature age and wearing that look peculiar to those deprived of some important faculty. What he lacked I could not conjecture. At first I thought the shrewd eyes might be sightless, but the man never hesitated in taking a step among the whirling vehicles. Then deafness suggested itself as the old man's infirmity, but was in turn dismissed. The enormous horn slung to a strap across his shoulder did not resemble a speaking trumpet — it looked more like an immense megaphone, except for its gracefully curved outlines and handsome enamel and nickel finish. The peculiarity that attracted most attention — one at which almost every idle pedestrian stopped to stare — was the odd-looking old man's inveterate habit of hitching up one shoulder and frequently bringing the smaller end of his queer horn on a line with his hat brim. The only remaining alternative, therefore, seemed to suggest that this strange looking individual must be dumb, but had contrived some extraordinary kind of instrument for making himself intelligible to others; but here theory was opposed by the fact that, so far as my observation went, he never tried to communicate with others.

It was, therefore, with surprise, not unmixed with gratification, that I saw him one day stop suddenly, with one of his peculiar hitches, and extend a cordial hand to my friend Hudson, who is in the electrical supply business. They carried on a brief, but apparently animated, conversation, and when they separated I hastened after Hudson and enquired the name of his queer acquaintance.

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"That!" cried Hudson. "Why, that's Marcus Brunder and his horn. I thought everybody knew about Marcus. Come, step in and lunch with me, and I'll tell you all about him."

As we lunched Hudson talked, and told me the following strange story, and as I give it pretty nearly in his exact words, I shall use no marks of quotation:

For years, you know, I have had a store fronting on Devonshire Street. It is on the ground floor, its large plate-glass windows afford a broad view of the busy thoroughfare, and above all, it is particularly central and convenient.

But it is frightfully, maddeningly noisy.

The great drays that continually pour through this main artery of commerce produce a roar of wheels and clatter of vehicles that fairly shake the building. With the ventilator-windows open we are deafened — with them closed we simply stifle. Ordinary conversation is rendered practically impossible during business hours.

Formerly I used to take prospective buyers into the big fireproof vault at the extreme rear of the office, until one day there was trouble with the lock. I happened to be inside at the time. So was the president of one of the largest concerns in New England.

It was a cheerful moment when, after two hours of semi-suffocation with our noses against a cold steel door-sill, the professional safe-openers on the outside announced that they would be obliged to use dynamite. When we crawled out the prospective customer had lost both eyebrows, most of his hair, and one whisker. And he didn't buy the goods, after all!

But, notwithstanding all the drawbacks, I have somehow stuck to the same old store; why, I can't exactly say; it's just my disposition. I hate a change.

One morning I had just arrived in my office, when in walked Brunder. Now, I'm not saying a word against Brunder. He's an inventor, and — unlike most of them — some of the things he gets up actually work. We paid him a thousand dollars for a single device only last spring. It lasted him just two weeks. Then he started in to invent something else.

Well, anyway, Brunder came in and sat down. I yanked open a couple of ventilators to let in the fresh morning air, and conversation immediately became an athletic feat. We communicated,

partly in pantomime, for some time, when Brunder suddenly yelled, "Say, I have a scheme."

"What is it now?" I yelled back.

"Shut those infernal transoms and I'll tell you," said he.

I did as he requested and he proceeded.

"This noise is something terrible," he vociferated, sitting close to me and talking into my ear.

I nodded. Some years ago I learned to save my strength.

"But I have a plan for doing away with it entirely!"

I looked surprised.

"It's based on well-known principles of physics, but is an entirely original and unique application of them."

I looked still more surprised.

"It just came to me as I was sitting here," he explained. "You know that it has been proven that both light and sound travel in waves! Also that it's an old law of physics that 'action and reaction are equal.'"

I nodded again with a grin — recollecting at the moment the spectacle I had once seen of two colored waiters, laden with dishes, on opposite sides of a swing-door, each trying to kick his way through at the same instant. I told this to Brunder.

"Precisely; that's the point! The door stood still!" he exclaimed. "Now, I read the other day that somebody has discovered that by throwing beams of light of the same intensity directly at each other the light waves nullified each other and produced a distinct zone of darkness. That being the case, what's the matter with generating a sound of equal intensity and projecting it against the other sound — and letting the sounds, as it were, swallow each other up — like the Kilkenny cats!"

"And sitting in the resulting sound vacuum?" I asked.

"Precisely."

"Well, but how are you ever going to work to do that?" I asked, incredulously.

"Easy enough. There is such a thing as a microphone — an instrument that so magnifies sound that you can hear a fly walk."

"So I believe," said I. "If I remember, it consists of a tiny double-pointed carbon suspended between two standards and connected with a receiver."

"Exactly so. Now take a Wheatstone bridge, such as is used in the naval range finders, and rig it up so that varying impulses will work, by means of electro-magnets, a sliding plug in, say, an organ pipe, adjusting it automatically to any pitch. Connect the pipe up with a motor-driven compressed air blower, and there you are!"

"Why," concluded the excited inventor in a burst of enthusiasm, "it would make this bedlam of an office as quiet and peaceful as a village church.

"But it will take just a little money," he continued with an appealing glance. "Simply for a few preliminary experiments; and, if there's anything at all in it — there's a fortune!"

Thereupon I did an unwise but very human thing. I think the amount was twenty-five dollars.

Days came and went, and with them the radiant and sanguine Brunder. First it was drawings and then it was patterns, and last it was twelve-gauge copper and insulating tape, and slowly, with the aid of sundry and numerous five and ten-dollar bills the marvellous mechanism went together.

Brunder, from time to time, reported good progress and finally came in one afternoon with the startling, and to me most unexpected announcement, that the thing actually would work.

"Not perfectly by any means, just yet — for it's full of flickers and stutters and skips — something like a phonograph; but just give me a week."

I did — and also a check for fifty.

At the end of that time he came in, exultant.

We shut the ventilators so he could talk, and he imparted to me in a hoarse and joyous whisper that it was a "sure winner." "Just one more test," said he, "and then I'll show it to you. I've just this minute got the permission of the Government to try it down to the Sandy Hook Proving Grounds. If it stands that it will stand anything. And the non-auditory radius is three feet four," said he with pride.

It would cost just $14.75 to get to the Sandy Hook Proving Grounds and return. In my joy I made it an even $15.

After the date when Brunder was due back from New York I missed him for three days. At the end of that time I ran around

to the little eighth story back room which he uses as a sort of office and laboratory.

The first thing my eyes fell upon, as I opened the door, was a huge piece of mechanism, which might have been anything from an incubator to a steam mangle, and which emitted a low droning. Beyond was Brunder sitting with his back to me, at a desk.

As I shut the door he did not look around, but continued his writing, undisturbed. Then I noticed, suspended from the ceiling, and within reach of Brunder's hand, the immense horn that has puzzled you and others so much.

"By Jove," said I, with a gasp of astonishment, "I believe the thing does work, after all!" I looked narrowly to see if the desk was connected with a wire, or whether his chair stood on an insulated mat, or anything of the kind. Then I walked toward him. I found I could plainly hear my own footsteps as well as other sounds, but, apparently, he was in the charmed zone and oblivious to any noise. I touched him on the shoulder, and with a jump of startled surprise he brought the small end of the horn to his ear, with that peculiar jerk of his, and said "Hello!"

"Well, tell us all about it?" I asked.

He leaned further toward me and hitched the big horn closer.

"What luck did you have, old man?" I rejoined, louder.

He shook his head mournfully and handed out a pad and pencil.

"This is *great*," I scrawled. "You're a wonder. I always knew you'd do it."

"Well — I don't know," said he. "I took my position six feet to one side of a 12-inch coast defence mortar. The charge was five hundred pounds. I can't tell whether my machine worked or not. They pulled the string — and I haven't heard anything since!"

But he has learned since then, by constant practice at the little end of the horn, to hear much of what is going on around him!

On the Trail of the Dolan Outfit.*

BY G. B. DUNHAM.

EAR the close of a chilly spring afternoon a horseman, driving before him another animal heavily packed, made his way slowly along the road which follows the windings of the North Platte River — that fickle and irresponsible stream, now high, now low, cutting new channels, undermining groves and sanding meadows.

The water was high and rising. The road only a few feet above its level was sloppy and slippery from recent rain. The pack-horse, turning aside to seize a mouthful of fresh grass, received a smart blow from the rope's end carried by the traveler, shied, lost his footing and went down in a heap in a dirty pool. There he lay, churning the mud with head and heels until the man dismounted, cut the ropes which bound his pack and dragged him out by the tail. Without any show of temper, the man readjusted the dripping pack. "A wet bed," said he in confidential tones to the tired horse, "is not the sort of a bed either of us hankers for, but it's about what we get to-night, and a free lodging on the open range goes with it if we don't get a move on and strike something before dark. Get along, Jimmy."

The road became heavier, and the man looked about vainly for some sheltered spot where he might camp. On his right hand the river flowed darkly; to the left the valley, even as a floor, and scarcely above the river level, extended for a mile to a high and broken cliff. The only break within the prospect was a distant clump of three or four great cottonwoods beside the stream; and muttering that he would spend the night in a tree-top to get off the sodden earth, the man headed toward them.

The drizzle had now become a sharp sleet which fell noisily, and was rapidly changing the tone of the landscape from dull green to glassy white when he drew rein at the cottonwoods.

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The trees stood upon a slight rise of ground, and the man, now pulling up the hat-brim which had sheltered his face from the sharp sleet, saw, to his surprise, that he had halted between two cabins built beneath their shade. The little earth-roofed buildings of one room each stood face to face at a distance of some forty feet.

"Twins," said the traveler.

The door of one cabin opened wide and a man in a buckskin shirt surveyed the newcomer, closing the door with a bang when the traveler sprang from his horse.

"Hello," shouted the horseman, hammering on the door; "you are d—— hospitable."

"You bet," said a voice behind him; "come right in. A rough day. Looks like Uncle Billy left the cover off the ice box, don't it?" And in the door of the other cabin stood, apparently, the same man, inviting him to enter and be at home.

"Twins!" ejaculated the astonished traveler.

"Put your horses in the stable and come in," repeated the settler. "I got rheumatiz and don't like to get wet."

"As for that, *I* don't like to get wet," the man replied, going around the house.

After caring for his stock, the traveler came into the cabin.

"I don't like to get wet," he said; "I hate it as bad as a cat. But I've been wet for three days. I'm chasing the Dolan outfit of surveyors. Have you seen them?"

"Nobody takes the valley road in the spring," replied his host; "you ought to know enough to keep on the mesa in this weather."

"I shall next time," said the traveler. "Who is your crusty neighbor in the other cabin, that shut the door in my face?"

"I've got no neighbors," said he. "The other house belongs to me."

"But somebody shut that door on me," insisted the newcomer.

"You were turned around," suggested the settler; "the door of this one blew shut just as you rode up."

The traveler seemed, at first, inclined to contest the point, but let it drop and assisted his host to negotiate an ample supper of beans, hot bread, and coffee.

When the tobacco smoke in the little room became dense enough to drive the dog into the open air the men grew confidential.

"If you are a surveyor," said the settler, who gave his name as Jo Byrnes, "I want you to run a line for me. I am trying to hold down two government claims. This one is my preemption, where the other cabin stands is my homestead. The line is somewhere between the two cabins. I have got a good pocket compass, and I have run it out for myself fifty times. Sometimes I make it run close to this door, and sometimes further north, but I don't know where it really is. I believe there is iron in those hills; how many degrees do you allow for iron? If I knew exactly where the line is, I would move my house onto it and place my bed across the line, so that I could sleep with my head on my homestead and my feet on my preemption. It keeps me all-fired busy to live in two cabins at once. I cook my meals in both houses and sleep every night in both beds. It is wearing me out. I haven't much money, but I'll give you ten dollars to locate that line for me so I can swear to it."

The surveyor suggested that Uncle Sam has long arms to reach law-breakers, and strong arms to punish them. Byrnes looked up nervously, as though the subject were an unpleasant one.

"Not the land laws," he insisted; "true of all the other laws. You'd far better — supposing you were in the hold-up line, for instance — let the mail go by, and tackle the express and passengers. If you so much as put your finger on a mail-bag they'll camp on your trail for a year. But the land laws don't count. Every man in the territory is breaking those every day — duplicating claims, making false proof, fencing public land, and keeping out settlers like me, who only want to get hold of a couple of claims. Look at our member of Congress. Why, if I am stealing land it is only petty larceny."

The surveyor remarked that Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden for petty larceny.

"So they were, and served them right," said Byrnes; "our member could a given them cards and spades and beat them out at a walk. He would have put a wire fence around the whole garden and turned in his stock."

The young surveyor was glad enough to accept the proffered bunk in one of the cabins, and retired marveling at the idiosyncrasy of the man who would be to such pains to "beat the government" out of a strip of river-washed land. "It must be more than half under water now," he reflected; "and if the rise continues a couple of days more the whole valley will be flooded."

The settler crossed to the other cabin, struck a light, slowly undressed, blew out his light, hurriedly resumed his clothes and passed out into the darkness. He was armed, but, for that matter, had worn a pistol in his belt all the evening. Noiselessly he groped along to the stable, where he found the surveyor's pack and unrolled the damp blankets. Not an inviting bed, surely, for a rheumatic, but he pulled off his boots and hat, and lay down with the blanket drawn over his head after the manner of the accustomed camper.

The first dull light of a cloudy morning scarcely showed between the chinks of the log stable when two men with sawed-off shot-guns in hand entered it and, stirring up the sleeper with a foot, commanded Byrnes to put up his hands. He was not easy to rouse, but at the third call scrambled up, saying: "Look out for that sorrel horse, stranger, he's a kicker."

"Now, who are you and what are you doing here?" demanded one of the men.

"I'm a surveyor, and I'm looking for Dolan's outfit," replied Byrnes promptly; "have you seen them?"

"Who is in the cabins?" asked the man; "talk fast. I am the sheriff of this county; Jim, here, is my deputy."

"One cabin is empty, far as I know," said Byrnes, "and the man that owns the place is alone in the other."

"I appoint you a deputy to help me arrest him," said the sheriff. "Got a gun?"

"Yes, I got a gun," said Byrnes, "but I don't want anybody to waste any powder on me. The county don't pay me any salary to go up against things."

"Come along. You have no choice, I appoint you," said the sheriff.

"What do you want this settler for?" asked Byrnes, as he ex-

amined the loads in his revolver; "he don't look like a bad one."

"I want him for a dozen hold-ups on the stage road," he answered, "and for letting his gun go off a few times, and for robbing the mails, and for some other trifles. Ready?"

The young surveyor wakened soon after dawn, and looked out of the cabin's one window just as the three armed men quickly and silently came to the door. He recognized his host among them, and his instant conclusion was that he had fallen among thieves. The door had no fastenings and had already been pushed ajar when he crowded the heavy table against it, braced himself, and cried out that the first man who stuck his nose through the door would lose it.

"Plunk him through the door," suggested Byrnes as they paused.

"I would," said the sheriff, "only I want to get him alive, so as to find out where he caches his plunder. Now listen, you man inside," he continued; "you are only one against three, and you are bound to lose. You may get one of us, but you can't get us all, and if you don't walk out like a gentleman we will fire this shanty and smoke you out. You know me. I'm the sheriff of this county, and I want you."

"You can't hold me up if there were thirty of you," said the surveyor, "and you wouldn't get five dollars apiece if you did."

"Hold-up be damned," replied the sheriff impatiently; "you've got hold-up on the brain. You know me. I've got a warrant for you. Look here," said he, poking it through the door.

"Why," said the surveyor, "you are barking up the wrong tree, sheriff," and he got down from the table and flung open the door; "I'm not Jo Byrnes; that's the man you want," pointing at his host.

"That's all right," said the sheriff; "just keep your hands up until I get the bracelets, will you?" And despite his protests the surveyor was handcuffed and disarmed.

"Now where's your plunder?" asked the sheriff. "You know I can make it a little easier for you if you show up what you've got."

"I'll make it easier for you if you take me into town hand-

cuffed," retorted the indignant surveyor. "Why, fifty men in that town know who I am."

"Lots of people will know you before you get out of this scrape," replied the sheriff. "You have been pretty smooth. If you want to be a fool now you got caught, suit yourself, but we'll find the stuff just the same. Jim"—to his deputy—"put the prisoner on my horse and take him in. Put him in the steel tank. Come back with two more men to search for the stuff. There must be a fortune in coin lying around here somewhere, and I am going to stay and look it up."

The sheriff was so eager to begin the search that he scarcely waited to get his prisoner mounted and started.

"You will consider yourself a special deputy to assist me until my men come from town," he said to Byrnes, who wanted to be off to find his surveyors.

"What has the man done?" asked Byrnes.

"He is the most successful road agent that ever operated in these parts, and he has lived right here within six miles of the stage road for two years. He always fooled us by riding off north after each job and coming in here afterwards on foot. I just lately got onto his game. I have been on his trail three days, and if I'd not lost it in the mud would have been here yesterday."

"Then I should not have been here to help you," said Byrnes.

"Pretty good thing for me to make such a capture just about now. It will be good for two years more in office."

"What's it worth?"

"Sixteen thousand for the two years, if it don't cost too much to get there."

"I suppose that road agent has made more than that in two years?" ventured Byrnes.

"You bet; twelve thousand coin in one haul."

The deputy sheriff rode off toward town leading the horse upon which the victim of mistaken identity was mounted with his feet tied together under the cinch, and the sheriff, with the actual old sinner as special deputy, began the search for treasure. The prisoner's hat had been forgotten, and he and his captor returned to get it. As they rode from the cabin door the second time, the sheriff, pursuing his quest, pulled a ring in the floor, opening a

small door, which disclosed a cellar. He descended into it, followed by Byrnes. And one of these two men was seen no more.

. . . . . .

The surveyor, in custody of Deputy Jim, looked back from the heights two miles distant and saw one man leave the cabins and force his horse into the rapid current of the river. The horse swam strongly and landed on the north bank far down the stream.

The river had risen and overflowed the bottoms when the deputy and posse returned next day, so that it was impossible to reach the cabins. One may swim a horse half a mile on occasion, if the water be deep enough, but one foot of water with soft mud beneath it is impassable.

When the freshet subsided the little knoll where the cabins had stood had crumbled and caved away into the stream. The clump of cottonwoods had been uprooted, and every vestige of the buildings had drifted away. A deposit of silt covered the valley from bluff to bluff, and no man could say where the cabins had stood.

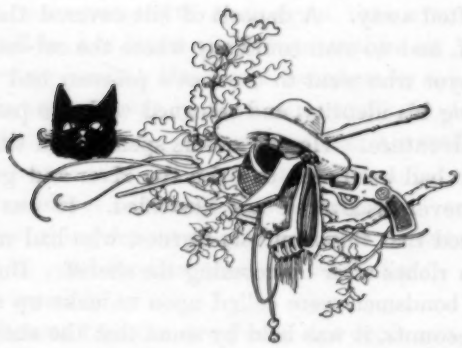
The surveyor who went to town as a prisoner had no difficulty in establishing his identity, and returned with the party to see the end of his adventure. He and others spent much time in trailing the man who had been seen to swim the river and go northward, but he was never discovered nor identified. It was at first generally assumed that this man was Byrnes, who had made off with his ill-gotten riches after overcoming the sheriff. But later, when the sheriff's bondsmen were called upon to make up a small shortage in his accounts, it was held by some that the sheriff had made away with Byrnes, and found a cache so rich that he could not afford to come in and give it up.

A third ingenious theory was that Byrnes had "whacked up" with the sheriff, there being plunder enough to make both men rich, and that both had gotten away — the sheriff on horseback and Byrnes afoot. Finally (for the meager description that could be had of the man who rode away northward fitted to neither) it was held by many that the men had a fight over the treasure in the cellar or cave under the cabin, and that if the place could be located an excavation would recover both bodies and much coin.

The surveyor concerned himself chiefly with the physical fea-

tures of the case. Later in the season he took the trouble to go down with his instrument, and demonstrated that no government subdivisional lines could have run near the site of the twin cabins. Nor was the name of Byrnes found on the books of the local land office.

No doubt the cabins were connected by a tunnel used by Byrnes to store his plunder. No doubt the tunnel is there yet. The cowboys who ride that range talk each spring of organizing a syndicate in the fall, and digging up the whole Platte Valley. It would be an interesting experiment.



She Said, "Come."*

BY LOUISE CLARK.

"WHO is she?"

"Old John Sargent's daughter; he died when she was a child, you know, and left his entire fortune to her."

"Why isn't she married?"

"They say she has buried her heart in Charlie Cutter's grave. You remember poor old Charlie was thrown from his horse some five years ago, broke his neck and her heart at one blow. She is a stunner though, isn't she? No use trying to get her, Billy. Settle down and calm yourself. My sister says she never had a spark of sentiment about her anyway, but now she seems to have lost all interest in anything. Oh, no, not a mean, stingy streak in her nature. She is very generous with her money, but gives as though she did not care a straw what she was giving the dust to — unnatural, very. I am afraid of her, myself, but she is a thoroughbred; never saw her do or look a thing out of the way."

"By Jove! I think the girl has a heart within her, and if I were going to be in town this winter, I would try and reach it. She walks like a queen. What is she doing off here?"

"Going to the cemetery. She has a key to the side entrance, and they say she comes here at all hours of the day or night, but there is never a flower on Charlie's grave. She makes no outside show. Give me a match."

"Does she live alone?"

"No; houseful of servants, and a cousin or something as a companion; she used to do slumming, but I heard she got mixed up in a row one night and was hustled off to the station house before the policeman found out who she was, and the whole force got down on their knees, and she was sent home, so they say, in the Black Maria. Anyway, she gets some one else to slum nowadays, and she pays the bills."

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"Is she a Blue Stocking?"

"Oh, come off, William; she is nothing but what a man would want his wife, mother, or sister to be — with a couple of millions thrown in. She goes to Europe — so Sallie says — every time she hears of any one who wants a start or a boost in art or science, and pretends it is a favor to her that the poor student accepts a couple of years' receipted bills. She runs a free kindergarten and dances like a peach. She takes a box by the season at the Grand, and turns it over to the young folks like a dear that she is; but, by Jove! she would give you the same kind of a nod, if she met you, as she would her cook, and there would be no more heart or soul in her greeting than in a dish of uncooked mushrooms. I hate to have a woman so independent and so polite that one can't catch hold of a straw for a good foundation for criticism. I wish you were going to be here, Billy. If any one could move her, you could. But she is a stunner and no mistake. Here comes Ned in his trap — alone, too — good luck, we'll ride home. Hi, Ned! room for two? Thanks."

To-day Dorothy Sargent entered the silent City of the Dead with more than sadness in her sweet face, and as she reached the grave that held all that was mortal of the one man she had ever loved, she pressed her face against the marble cross, and in her anguish cried aloud, "Help me, dearest!"

Suddenly, as though the load were lifted from her heart, and her prayer answered, she sprang from the ground and hurried home.

Going at once to her room, she took from her desk three letters; bowing her head upon her hands, she whispered: "Whatever is is right; my love will guide me. I will be satisfied."

A messenger had brought to her the first letter from the Metropolitan Club. She drew it from the envelope and re-read the lines she knew she would have to answer.

Before you opened the envelope which holds this letter, Dorothy Sargent, you knew who was the writer and you knew what he had to tell you.

By breaking the seal you have proved you are willing once again to listen to me.

I have returned to my native land after an exile of ten weary years. God knows I did my best to give my wife the love she craved, and He knows I did my best to make her happy and was as true as steel to her, but in His wisdom,

which I dare not question. He gave her pure mind the power of seeing beyond what I gave her, and the dear child returned to her Maker broken-hearted, leaving me and our four motherless children to you, my one love, my one thought, and my dearest wish.

Would that you were poor, that I might give to you what you could not otherwise have!

Nothing but pity for Marion's children, for my children, can tempt you to come to me now? Come! I will make you love me, I will, and you must know it.

No man ever gave to a woman a purer love than is offered to you again.

Give to me this one word I crave, in the name of the innocent woman who knew she held the heart that belonged to another. I cry to you — and not in vain?

JOHN H. NORTON.

Rigid and white as death, she threw the letter on the burning coals, and watched the flames devour the paper till there was nothing left but a gray mass that trembled and fell to pieces as a whiff of wind blew across the grate.

Opening the second letter, she read: —

Dearest: For the years I have known and loved you, I have never till now dared to tell you of my love.

You were rich, I was poor. Shame on me, that I would so belittle you! As though you did not know an honest man's heart is worth more than Crœsus's wealth.

You know what I have done in the scientific world, but you do not know what I have accomplished has been through you, and that for you alone I have succeeded.

I dare now to offer to you the heart and life which will go on and on working for you, spurred by the glorious knowledge that you have said, "I love you."

May I go to you, and take you in my arms and hold you close to the heart that beats for you alone?

That I have told you of my love makes me happy. That you will bid me come is the prayer of Thine,

SYLVESTER NEWCOMB.

As the poor girl finished reading this letter, she threw it, as she had done the other, in the fire. As she watched it burn she said aloud: "I could be happy with him; his profession would be more to him than he imagines, and he might not see I cannot love as he does."

And she read the third letter.

My Dear Dorothy: You were a little girl when I saw you first. I loved you then because your beautiful eyes were so like those God had given to the woman I was soon to marry.

You know of the short year of happiness which was granted me, and you know what a long, weary life I have led since my wife died.

You, dear, have been, and are, the one woman in this world to whom I can offer myself and what is left of my life and heart.

"Thou art not my first love,
I loved before we met;
But the vision of that summer dream
Is pleasant to me yet.

"Thou art my last love,
I will not say my best;
My heart has shed its outer leaves
To give thee all the rest."

I do love you, not with the boyhood passion you may crave, but with the true and honest love of a man old enough to be your father. For years I have loved you thus, but would not tell you, dear. I wanted you to have the happiness which a younger man might give you, and I loved you so tenderly, I wanted you to have what would please you most.

You know your own heart's story. I do not ask you to tell me anything, but, if you will be my wife, I will do all in my power to make you as happy as I know you can make me.

Send me one word, dear, and I will promise to watch over the treasure God has trusted to my care, if you will bid me come.

Faithfully yours,
THOMAS OTIS SEWELL.

"He asks so little! I ought to be able to live with him and be happy. I will be making less sacrifice if I say 'Come' to him, and his dear old gentle life will be a benediction indeed."

With tears in her eyes, she laughed aloud as she threw this last letter in the fire, and while watching it burn she said: "I can't marry them all."

Taking a sheet of paper in her hand and smoothing it gently, as though giving it a little blessing, she dipped her pen in the ink, and with a shudder as though it were with her own blood she were writing, she wrote the one word — "Come"!

Folding the paper, she put it in an envelope and sealed it.

She then drew another sheet from the case before her and wrote upon it: —

My dear, dear friend: I love you too well to give myself to you, and myself is all I have to give.

God grant you may find a woman worthy of your honest love, is the prayer of

DOROTHY SARGENT.

Enclosing this letter in an envelope and sealing it, she gave a sigh of relief, and took another sheet of paper, on which she wrote: —

No woman living ever grieved more in saying no to a devoted suitor than does your sincere and unhappy friend,

DOROTHY SARGENT.

And she sealed this, as she had the others, and went to the library, leaving all three of her answers on her desk.

Touching the bell in the hall, as she passed through, the butler answered her call.

"James, tell Poole to bring me the three letters on my desk. She may stamp them first."

Her maid brought her the letters. Stepping to the table, she bowed her head and whispered: "God help me to direct these aright."

On one she wrote: —

JOHN H. NORTON, ESQ.,
METROPOLITAN CLUB,
CITY.

On the second: —

PROFESSOR SYLVESTER NEWCOMB,
WASHINGTON,
D. C.

And on the third: —

HON. THOMAS OTIS SEWELL,
MURRAY HILL HOTEL,
NEW YORK CITY.

"Give these to James to post; I am not at home if any one calls this evening, and will dine alone."

Old Double-talk's Compassion.*

BY PHILIP VERRILL MIGHELS.

INGLED with the howl of the wind and the murmur of a score of Chinese voices, was a ceaseless chink and chink of gold. It was in a gambling den of Chinatown. Fumes of opium-tainted tobacco crept like wraiths through the air and all but overcame the two saucer-lamps, which cast a dull red glow on the eager Chinese faces. A dozen of the men were seated at a table, where the game was in progress; the others were standing behind, their countenances expressive of greed in various manners and degrees.

The cheerful rhythm of the precious metal issued from the murkiest corner. There a man was standing, monotonously shaking a bag containing current coins of the realm. The practice was so common in the Chinese quarter that none of the individuals present paid the slightest attention. All of them knew that the coins were being reduced in weight by the constant striking together; all were aware that to burn the bag and thus secure the knocked-off dust-of-gold would be easy, and then that the coins would "pass" in trade as readily as any.

The tall Chinese to whom the gold belonged was confident of the honesty of the man who shook the bag, as well he might have been, for the man was white and he had once been a member of a sacred calling. He was known to the Chinese inhabitants by a name which signified Old Double-talk, a result of his having acted as court-interpreter in Chinese cases whenever a legal necessity arose. That he once had possessed another name there is no substantial reason to doubt, inasmuch as he had become so honored in his former Connecticut home that influential people thrust upon him the distinction of Missionary at large in the Canton province of China.

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In a manner entirely innocent he had been tempted by curiosity to try the "taste" of a bead of opium, burned at the end of a pipe. Had the pipe been an octopus it could hardly have embraced him in a coil more resistless. Guilty and ashamed he resigned from his post and returned to his home, but a pipe and a lamp and a five-tael tin of opium were cunningly concealed in his trunk. Then on a fatal night he was deep in his opium dreams and the lamp was overturned. His sister lifted and pushed him out at the window, only to fall herself in the fierce hot arms of the flames.

His social world, to which he dared not confess, refused him the boon of obscurity. Unable to bear himself in a false capacity, burdened by self-accusation, he ran away from his friends, his relatives and his calling. Tramping for years he came at length to a western village at the edge of which a Chinatown existed. Fascinated, persuading himself that here he could work out his own repentance, he chose this spot for his living interment.

The environment was admirable, suited to many kinds of self-denial. He found himself readily ostracized from all association in the village proper, and rarely tempted to over-indulgence of food among the Chinese. The one particular battle which was rendered frequently too hard to fight was that between his resolution and his desire once more to taste a pipe, for the insidious fumes of opium were constantly in his nostrils.

Double-talk had various means of gaining his daily bread. Aside from the far-between opportunities of acting officially in court, on the returns of which he must certainly have failed to exist, he was jack-of-all-occupations in Chinatown. Thus he cured the bleeding backs of the donkeys employed by Kow Sup Fun and Wan Lee Toi to bring down wood from the mountains; he doctored the chickens, pigs and ducks of Suey Fat when ailment overtook them; he played the brass pan in the orchestra, whenever a funeral required the service; and he shook the bag of coins to wear off the metal.

He was well aware of the fact that to reduce in weight or to mutilate the coins of the country was prohibited by law. Nevertheless, he agitated the gold with vigor, his conscience rendered dull by hunger and fatigue. On that particular night he was

wet, in addition to his usual unnurtured condition, for the rain had soaked him throughout the day. Moreover, he felt a certain parental responsibility, as he gazed from time to time into the depths of two great brown eyes at his knee which he found unfailingly lifted to his own.

Almost a part of the shadows, a small Chinese boy was clinging to his leg, with chubby, dimpled hands, winking wistfully in the smoke — a silent little chap, who regarded Old Double-talk with a love too great to be expressed. This small bronze bit of humanity spent nearly all his time with the man, always following him about, with a singular instinct for keeping on his trail, or holding fast to his hand when together they walked, or clinging to anything clutchable if both the hands happened to be engaged.

The child, who was called Luey Sing, was the first-born, and indeed the only-born, of Luey Hop, a venerable vendor of lizards which the learned converted into physic. As might be conjectured, Luey Hop was not a wealthy man. In addition to being poor he was vigorously ignored, if not disliked, by the Chinese population, having once committed the error of furnishing certain police with information detrimental to a large and illicit industry — the cooking of opium without a license.

Little Luey Sing shared, in a miniature manner, the ignominy thrust upon his father, yet he was inconsistently happy, for he enjoyed an undisputed possession of Double-talk for a friend and companion. This night, amidst the clatter of Chinese words and phrases, the crisp, clear sound of the buttons being pushed on the wires of a counter, and the metallic ring of the golden coins, the little fellow looked upward in adoration so long that his neck was nearly ready to break. His eyes began to drop their curtains; his tiny fat fingers somewhat loosened their grip. He nodded and started and nodded again. At length with an effort he opened his big, wistful eyes, as he noted the kindly, wrinkled face above bending thoughtfully down. Then, in a baby voice, he lisped: —

"Now Luey lay me down to theep."

"All right, little man," said Double-talk, glancing at a clock to assure himself his time was fully measured, "we'll trot along home." He carried the bag to a raw-boned Celestial who was

running the fan-tan table and put it down. The Chinese glanced at the time-piece and paid ten cents from the money at his hand.

"Good-night," said Double-talk, without expecting an answer, and taking little limber Sing in his arms, he left the place and trudged away through the wet and glittering avenue of darkness.

Luey was sound asleep when the door of his father's dwelling was pushed quietly open, and he was therefore laid for a moment in his bed, to which his protector groped his way. When a candle sputtered out gushes of light, Old Double-talk stood white and amazed at what he saw.

The form of Luey Hop was half way only on a bunk; his face was on the floor. He was dead. How old and tired he looked!

Double-talk was harshly jarred by this unexpected sight. He had known the old man to be feeble and underfed; he had given all the comfort and all the food he could to this honest and down-trodden companion, but he had never suspected the shadow of death of being so near.

He took little Sing in his arms again and hurried to secure the attendance of Doctor Ah Kee. This fine old gentleman knew at a glance through his prodigious glasses that acute pneumonia, super-induced by the chill and wet of the day, had done its work rapidly. Luey Sing was fatherless, but not parentless; that is to say, he was now an orphan to whom Old Double-talk was foster-mother and foster-father in one. The Chinese visited sufficient of the sins of the departed on the son to warrant them in preserving a total indifference to the little fellow's being and to his adoption by a man of another color.

But the ceremonious people, however much they may have neglected Luey Hop during his life, stinted no part of the usual rites, now that he and his craving for sustenance were stilled. For several days, the weather being cold, they frightened off devils with suitable and probated noises, and burned the full allotment of punks at the shrine in the Joss-house, before the interment. At the end of the proper time the weazened old form was conveyed to the graveyard with appropriate orchestration.

Old Double-talk was obliged to refuse to play the brass pan on this occasion. He therefore attended with little Luey Sing holding to his hand, the only genuine mourner in all the noisy procession.

With masterful inconsequence the Chinese people, who had refused to assist in the maintenance of Luey Hop in life, had prepared a lavish and elaborate banquet for his use when at last he was dead. They saw his coffin covered in the grave and the mound roughly spaded into shape on top, when they set it all about with roasted pig, chickens and ducks, boiled rice, grease pudding and fried weeds. They set up lighted punks and burned no end of red paper to smoke out or keep off hungry demons; and then they went back to their lives of work, fan-tan and opium.

Double-talk looked hungrily on at the rite of decoration with food. He and little Luey had been less than half fed for the past three days, and by reason of his grief he had earned not a cent — not even the trifle which he ordinarily got for playing the pan at a burial.

That night, when his pangs had increased with the darkness, he was over-distressed by the moans of hunger which were uttered, now and again, by little Sing, in his sleep. It became too much to be endured. He blew out the candle, at length, and crushing on his battered hat, went forth in the frosty night. He turned to the north and pushed ahead rapidly, facing the fangs of the wind. He was hunched all up by the cold that crept to his marrow and tortured by waking dreams of the peace and ecstasy which a pipe of opium could bring. Doggedly he hurried on till he came to the graveyard gate. This he climbed, without a sound.

Quickly he stumbled across the unmarked mounds, where the Chinese were but napping before they should all be transported to sleep in China, and he went directly toward the grave of Luey Hop.

He was almost upon it when he suddenly floundered, and collided heavily with a human form. His hair crept upward; a chill shot down and up his spine; a feeling of horror alone prevented the cry which rose to his lips.

"Ugh," grunted the form, in a voice too thick for a ghost, and bounding to his feet one of the Pah Ute Indians whose regular predatorial visits to the graves of departed Celestials gave color to the story that the spirits of the dead devoured the banquet — a hearty but super-frightened buck — darted swiftly away to the sagebrush.

Old Double-talk was startled so thoroughly that his teeth began to chatter. Nevertheless, he realized that he was the dominant spirit of the evening, and he therefore made all possible haste to appropriate all of the funeral meats, for himself and Luey Sing, and then to beat a retreat the way he had come. He had robbed the dead. He permitted his conscience to freeze, for the sake of keeping alive the bodies of little Luey Sing and himself.

Day by day the severity of the winter increased. The snow became so deep that the donkeys could not be sent to the mountains, and in consequence there were not any bleeding backs to cure. Pigs and ducks and chickens left their diseases out in the cold. Litigation, or trials requiring a Chinese interpreter, were not even so much as on the calendar. And not every day did the gambling table accumulate sufficient of the golden coins to warrant a shaking.

Such a dearth of money and credit and chances for work prevailed in the village that violent means of gaining a bare subsistence had come into being. Robberies were frequent and nearly always accompanied, if not preceded, by arson. So great was the terror of the people that a citizens' union had been organized, and desperate men kept nightly watch in the streets. In secret they had also formed a vigilance committee, whose warning was out for all offenders to heed on pain of death.

So engrossed was Old Double-talk with his task of keeping the body and soul of little Sing together, and incidentally his own, that the state of affairs was quite without his ken. Thus he sat looking at the little bronze lad, one brilliant, moon-lit night. Sing had eaten a crust of bread in the morning and a crust the day before; the child invariably ate more than the man. All that day the great wistful eyes of the little chap had searched those of his friend, appealingly. To-night they were blazing with hunger although forever yearning in expression. There was no such thing as sleep in their solemn depths. The little fellow came to lay his head on his protector's knee.

"Sleepy, little man?" Old Double-talk inquired. "Want now I lay me down to sleep?"

The child shook his head.

"Hungry?" crooned the man.

Luey nodded, timidly.

"Bless your poor little heart, you're starving." He took the cold little chap in his arms and tried to rock him to sleep.

The man's mind was working oddly. He felt that anything, however desperate, was better than to let this helpless child succumb to the pangs of hunger; his conscience had ceased to be, in his anguish. The Chinese people had given all the aid they would. It was cheaper, to bury Luey Sing than to keep him.

Old Double-talk thought with composure, yes, eagerly, of robbing another grave, were there only a grave to rob. Why not kill some old Chinaman and get the food they would certainly leave on his mound, said his mind. He started at himself, so abhorrent was this foreign thought. Yet his calculating instinct pursued the idea to its end. They would keep the body so long that the child and himself might die before the feast was spread.

Little Luey Sing was still diffidently nodding to assure him of his hunger. It made the heart of the man bleed to see him.

A sudden mental picture occurred to his mind. He saw some laborers carrying potatoes to an elongated pyramid of them, which they were covering with straw and earth, to preserve the raw articles of food through the winter. He thought of the rabbits digging into this pile in the night to save their lives. It was theft to take those potatoes. He had never wilfully wronged any living being but himself; he had never lived any but a life of innocent self-destruction; but — this child that he loved was dying. A man has a right, he told himself, to preserve human life, even by desperate means. The idea got possession of his soul. He was frantic to be digging at the pile of potatoes. A wild, haggard look came in his face. The child saw it come and was frightened.

"What is it, little man?" said the foster-parent tenderly. "Was he awful tired and hungry? Never mind, old Ghee Sum will get him something to eat. Luey go to sleep — like a good little boy, and Ghee Sum won't be long."

In his haste he laid little Sing in his bed with all his clothing on. "But, wait, little man," he said, with a sense of shame, "we haven't said our prayers." He placed the child on its knees by the bunk and knelt there beside him, simply. When the wee Chinese chap had repeated the sweet, old-fashioned appeal of

children, Old Double-talk remained kneeling a minute, to add his own petition, in a mumble. And when he arose to place little Luey in the bed and to kiss the soft wee face, a light of fatherly anguish was burning in his eyes.

"Good night, you poor little scamp," he said, somewhat hoarsely, "old Ghee Sum will soon be back with something nice."

An hour later, when he came furtively along through the shadows of the village, with a sack half filled with potatoes, he was startled, on turning, to see a sudden glow of fire athwart the sky, in the direction whence he had come. Cries arose from terrified women and angry men. A clangor of bells burst on the frosty air; a din of shouts, screaming whistles and reverberating thuds of horses' hoofs seemed to fill all the night. He felt all the fear in which his conscience was suddenly plunged. He started to run with his plunder.

Almost on the instant a watchman darted upon him. He dropped the sack and got away, only to dash into the arms of half a dozen men who were racing madly toward the fire. He was clutched by a dozen fierce and merciless hands. A score of maddened citizens quickly gathered about him. There was neither law nor order nor reason in the mob which soon collected in the street; and no one noticed a timid little form that ran to the shadows for concealment.

The roar of the firemen thundering by with their engine added confusion to the moment. Then a leader came pushing his way among the captors. He stilled their babel, and then they became truly grim and terrible.

There was no delay; there was simply the calm and awful determination to do their work and do it quickly. Immediately all were in motion, the vainly protesting prisoner in their midst, marching voicelessly away, their feet making crisp, hard clatter on the frozen ground.

When at length Old Double-talk was standing, bound, beneath the cross-beam of the cemetery gate, he knew their purpose. He knew that nothing could stop them now.

"God help you," he murmured, "you don't know what you are doing."

And then when at last those silent men had scattered to the

four winds, and only the creak and creak of the rope on the beam, as something swung in the wind, made sound, a timid little form came slowly from the brush and approached the spot.

It was Luey Sing, who had followed unerringly, guided alone by his childish love and natural instinct. He could barely reach the ankles of his friend and protector, but these he clutched, with an odd little coo of joy, and throwing his arms about the unresponsive legs, laid his chilled little cheek against the cloth.

The creak and creak might have seemed like the chink and chink of the gold when Old Double-talk shook the bag; howbeit, the child was patient. He waited and waited for a word or a sign. He looked up wistfully to catch the twinkling answer from the eyes he knew and loved so well. Slowly his thin little body chilled through and through. Yet he made no complaint; he was waiting for the creak to cease.

At last, as a peaceful warmth and drowsiness began to overtake him, he timidly opened his lips.

"Now Luey lay me down to theep," he lisped in a whisper.

The old-time loving response failed to come. He waited, gazing yet more wistfully upward. His eyes were so weary and heavy. He tried again:

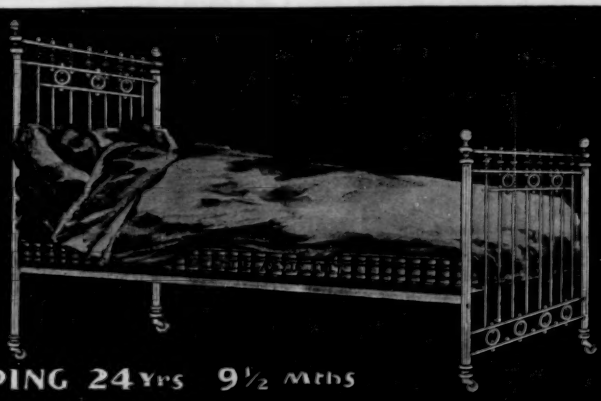
"Now Luey lay — me down to — theep —
I play — the Lor' — my thoul — keep. . . .
If I — thould die — befloe — wake,
I play — the — Lor' — my — thoul — t-a-k-e."

His eyes were closed. His arms were tight about the lifeless ankles. Breathing a sad little sigh he fell into the sweetest and longest of slumbers.

In the morning early the leader of the mob came guiltily out to the graveyard gate. He stood there awed, when he came in sight of the place and viewed the silent figure and the frozen little form of Luey Sing still clasping the stiffened knees.

"My God," said he, "the poor old man — the poor little kid."

How do you spend your life?



SLEEPING 24 Yrs 9½ Mths

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ILLNESS 1 Yr 5½ Mths

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